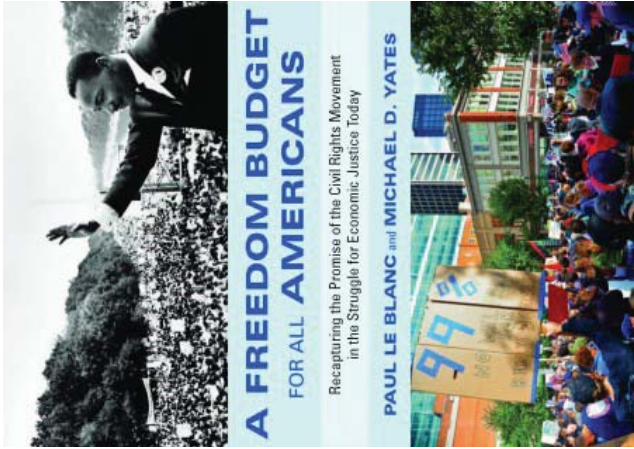


THE RADICAL THRUST OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

**JOBS AND FREEDOM:
THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
& THE FREEDOM BUDGET**



CHOICE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC TITLE

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, the so-called Jim Crow system of racist segregation was established throughout the Southern United States.



-- racist caricature from Minstrel shows.



Throughout the South, racists were finally successful in preventing most blacks from voting.



The Jim Crow system included laws -- especially a bogus "literacy test" -- designed to stop blacks from being allowed to vote.

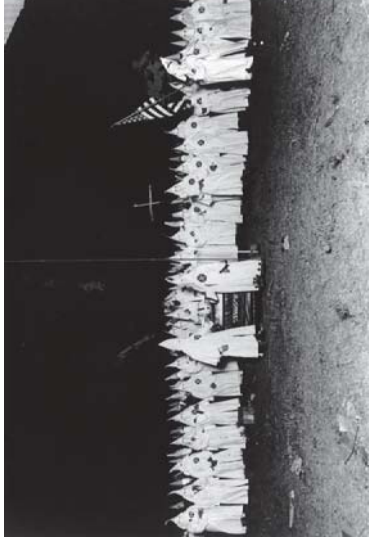


"By the way, what's the big word?"

Poverty and unemployment, inadequate housing and education and health care were much higher among blacks than among whites.



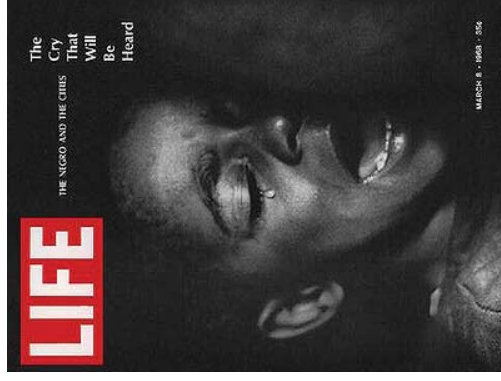
Jim Crow was enforced by violence from groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, but also "legally" by the police.



This was true in the North too.



The creation of black ghettos, and the persistence of oppressive conditions of social and economic injustice, were features of Northern life even without Jim Crow laws.



Over the years there have been many leaders of struggles for the liberation of African Americans.



While it may have been more intense in the South, there was an intense hunger for justice among African Americans throughout the land.



Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of these – another was **Malcolm X**, who disagreed with King on many things, but agreed with him on the need to struggle for black liberation.

In 1954 **Thurgood Marshall**, lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), persuaded the Supreme Court that segregation in public education violates the U.S. Constitution.

Many Southern whites made it clear they would not accept this.



White racist mobs – and also Southern state and local governments – mobilized to preserve the Jim Crow system.



White Citizens Councils were organized throughout the South to mobilize racist opposition to civil rights.



Dedicated individuals built a massive civil rights movement against racism – and they changed the history of our country for the better.



Inspired by anti-colonial independence struggles, some civil rights tacticians were drawn to the nonviolent resistance struggles developed by **Mohandas Gandhi** in India.



Martin Luther King became well known for standing up to racist authorities in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955-56, but there were many – two of the most prominent being **E. D. Nixon** and **Rosa Parks**.



Nixon and Parks after her arrest.



King arrested, following Rosa Parks' example.



Nixon was a long-time labor activist associated with A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He was also president of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Rosa Parks had been working for years, through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) – and her refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man resulted in her arrest, and the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott.



The black community of Montgomery rallied, marched, and walked rather than riding the segregated buses – building mass pressure that compelled the courts to order the de-segregation of the public transit system.



Montgomery developments inspired progressive currents throughout the country.

Freedom is Rising in the South



Rustin had worked with **A. J. Muste** of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and **David McReynolds** of the War Resisters League and became a seasoned organizer and central figure in applying nonviolent tactics in the struggle against the Jim Crow system.



A. J. Muste
Fellowship of Reconciliation



Pacifist picket - 1940s



With first Freedom Ride 1947



With Nehru in India



David McReynolds
War Resisters League



With King in Montgomery 1955



At debate with Malcolm X



Someone else who helped with the Montgomery Bus Boycott was **Bayard Rustin** – a skilled organizer who had been active in radical peace and human rights struggles for years – and would remain so.



Another non-violent radical who helped King was **Ella Baker**. Originally with the NAACP, she helped King establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and also the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

She mentored, taught and inspired innumerable numbers of young activists.



Hundreds of dedicated organizers and activists became involved.



In its early incarnation, SNCC emphasized a commitment to nonviolence and to an inter-racial movement to end racism.



Their first major action was to break the law by sitting in at “whites only” lunch counters in the South.



SNCC helped to spearhead the struggle for black voting rights in the South.



In 1964 it mobilized black and white students from the North to help with the Freedom Summer project to advance voting rights and political organization.



The heroism and dedication of the civil rights activists became legendary.

Among the leading SNCC activists pictured here are **Fannie Lou Hamer** (with microphone), **Stokely Carmichael** (in hat), **Eleanor Holmes**, and **Ella Baker**.



Bob Moses was legendary as one of the most thoughtful and capable SNCC organizers.



In addition to voter registration, Freedom Summer operated “Freedom Schools” to teach children and adults literacy, literature, and history – especially African American History.



There was a powerful transformation of consciousness among African Americans.



Overcoming fear in order to stand up for their rights – these became words in the songs that they sang.

Black ministers who were radical activists played an especially important role.

Rev. James Lawson



Rev. C. T. Vivian

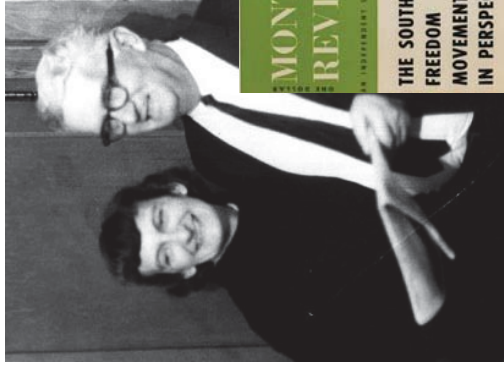


Another left-wing white Southerner was **Myles Horton**, Director of the Highlander Folk School, which trained labor and civil rights organizers in the South.



Martin Luther King, Jr., folksinger Pete Seeger, Horton's daughter Charis, Rosa Parks, and Rev. Ralph Abernathy, 1957.

Liberal and left-wing Southern whites provided important assistance – like **Anne** and **Carl Braden**, of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF).



Anne Braden interviewing Rosa Parks for SCEF's monthly journal, *The Southern Patriot*.

← Anne Braden's 1965 report is still worth reading.



The White Citizens Councils and other defenders of Jim Crow smeared Highlander as a “Communist Training School.”

Bill boards throughout the South used this to attack King.
But the civil rights movement could not be stopped.



Another important force for civil rights was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), headed by **James Farmer**.



CORE activists included **Mary Hamilton**, **Ruth Turner**, **George Wiley**, **Floyd McKissick**, **Donald Elfe**, **Norman Hill**, **Velma Hill**, and many more.



Mary Hamilton



George Wiley



Norman Hill



Floyd McKissick & Donald Elfe



Ruth Turner



Velma Hill

While active in the South, CORE had its largest base in the North, where it specialized in nonviolent direct action to challenge various problems related to racism.

Tom Kahn, James Farmer, Ernest Green, and Rachelle Horowitz at a New York City sit-in.



Norman and Velma Hill being arrested at a New York City protest.



In 1961 CORE organized the Freedom Rides, in which integrated delegations of activists in the North took Greyhound Buses to the South to challenge racial segregation laws in transportation facilities.

They faced arrest and violence.



Jim Peck was one of several Freedom Riders who were badly beaten. →

In 1963 there was a major civil rights campaign initiated in Birmingham, Alabama. It involved large numbers of young people.



The police engaged in systematic intimidation, but the protests grew.



Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) played a central role in these protests.



Fire hoses were turned on the protesters.



There were police dogs.



There were massive arrests.



Children were arrested too.

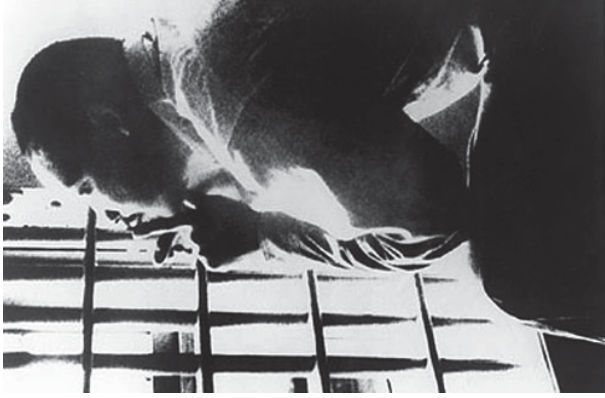


The jails were filled.



White clergymen in Birmingham sharply criticized Rev. King for causing so much trouble.

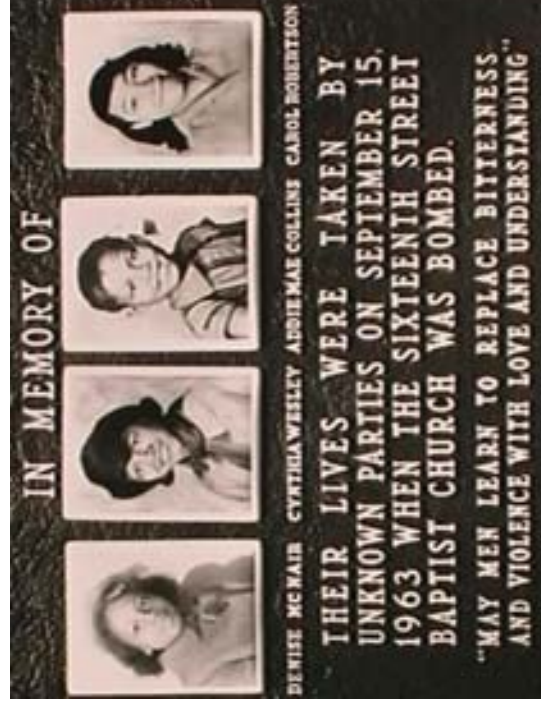
King responded with his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”



There were many martyrs – most of them African American activists such as Mississippi’s outstanding NAACP leader **Medgar Evers**.



Some of the martyrs were children.



In 1964 three civil rights activists – Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner – disappeared during Freedom Summer. Their bodies were found some weeks later.



In 1965, Northern civil rights volunteer Viola Liuzzo was shot in the head, one night in Alabama, when she drove black civil rights protestors back to their homes.



Southern police forces were not interested in solving such murders. Some were involved in helping to carry them out.



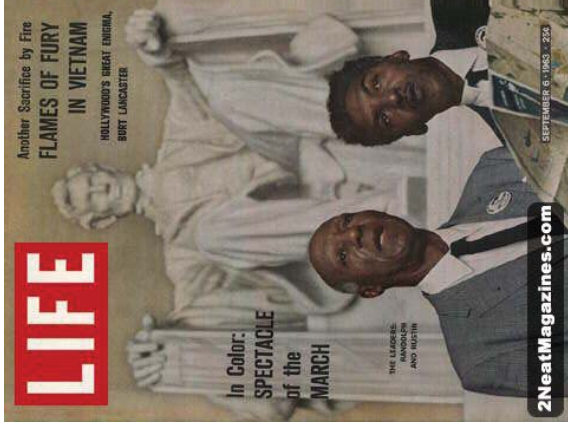
A. Philip Randolph, prominent black trade union leader and a veteran of many protests called for a 1963 March on Washington to advance civil rights.



Randolph protesting in the 1940s.



Randolph and his aide Bayard Rustin decided to call it a **March for Jobs and Freedom** to **link the issues of racial justice and economic justice**.



The formal leadership of the march consisted of the nation's most prominent civil rights leaders: John Lewis of SNCC, Whitney Young of the Urban League, Randolph, King, Farmer, and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP.



Lewis, Young, Randolph, King, Farmer, Wilkins

Rustin, central organizer for the march, worked tirelessly – with the treasurer for the march, trade unionist **Cleveland Robinson**, and with many, many others.

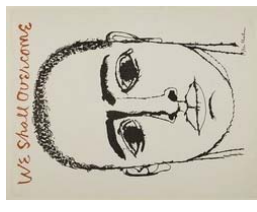


Rustin and Robinson



Rustin consulting with volunteer marshals for March.

But what made the March a success was the mass participation.



Massive trade union participation was mobilized (despite AFL-CIO President George Meany's short-sighted refusal to endorse the march).



George Meany



People
came
from
across
the land.



Organizers hoped for at least 100,000. Police estimates put the crowd at 250,000. Some have said it was twice that large.



Rustin asked the outstanding actors, husband and wife, **Ossie Davis** and **Ruby Dee** to organize entertainers and show business celebrities for the March – and they did.



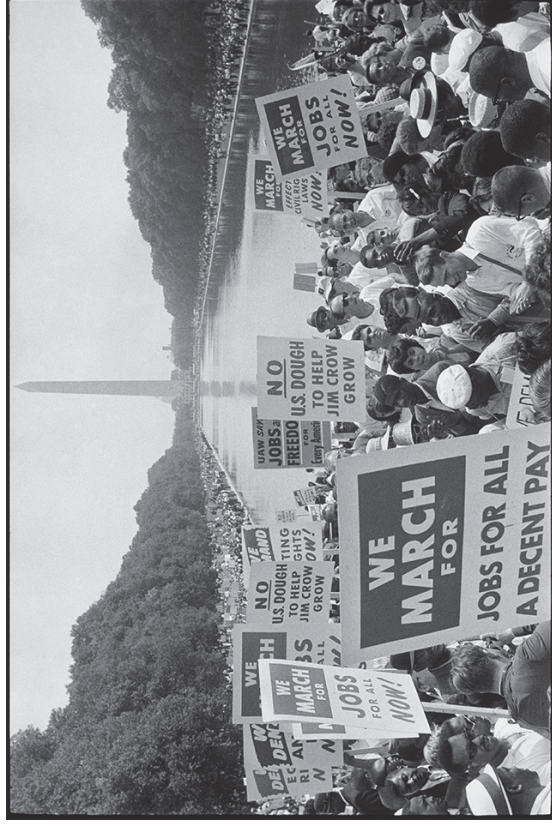
Among the singers were Joan Baez and Bob Dylan.



Charlton Heston, author James Baldwin, Sidney Poitier, Marlon Brando, Harry Belafonte and many others were also on hand.



But the March was made so impressive by the many, many “everyday people” who became part of it . . . and who helped to make history.



The words and ideas of Rustin, King, and others who spoke had greater resonance because of those who rallied to their words and ideas.



The mass protests created a popular pressure that compelled passage and enforcement of civil rights and voting rights acts, ending the Jim Crow system.



Even with the right to vote and the end of segregation laws, poverty and unemployment remained twice as high among blacks as among whites.



Randolph, Rustin, King and others concluded the best solution was **full employment and a decent standard of living for all people.**



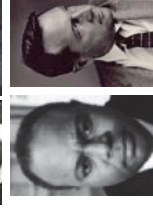
Many prominent civil rights figures were **socialists** – believing there was a link between **racial justice and economic justice.**



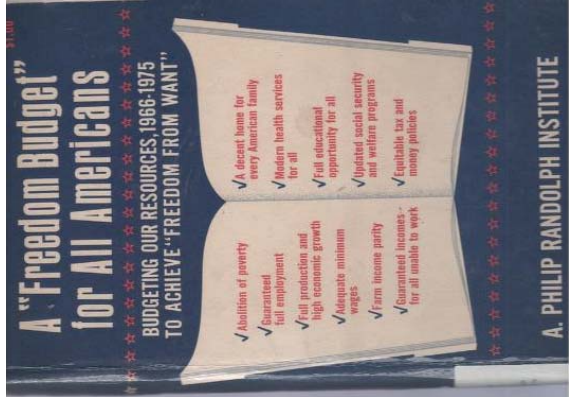
By socialism they meant our *economy*
 → should be owned by society,
 → should be democratically controlled,
 → should be used to meet the needs of all.



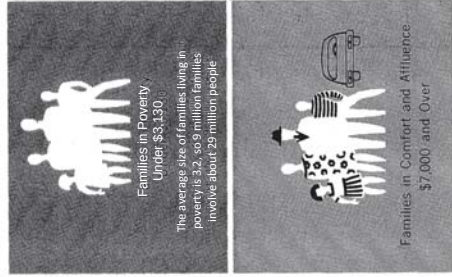
Some (not all) were in the Socialist Party.



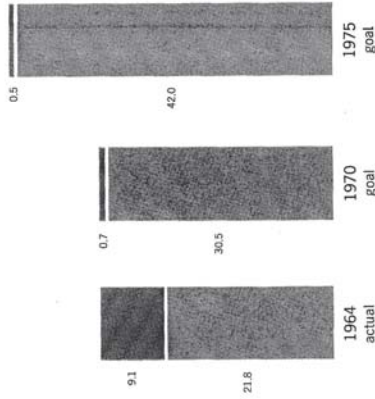
Such values were contained in a Freedom Budget for All Americans that they put forward in 1966.



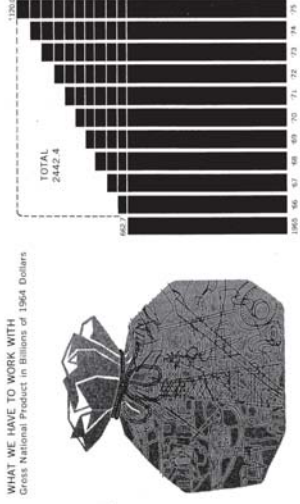
The Freedom Budget was designed to provide decent living conditions and dignity for all – eliminating material causes of racism.



WHAT THE FREEDOM BUDGET MEANS FOR FAMILY INCOMES
Number of Families (millions)



Endorsed by over 200 prominent civil rights, labor, religious and academic leaders, it offered a plan to end poverty within a ten-year period.



Excerpt from Freedom Budget summary →

The Freedom Budget shows how to do all this without a raise in taxes and without a single make-work job—by planning prudently NOW to use the economic growth of the future, and with adequate attention to our international commitments.

The key is jobs.

We can all recognize that the major cause of poverty could be eliminated, if enough decently paying jobs were available for everyone willing and able to work. And we can also recognize that, with enough jobs for all, a basic cause of discrimination among job-seekers would automatically disappear...

But at the same time that the Freedom Budget was put forward, a U.S. military escalation in Vietnam was taking place – drawing energy and resources away from resolving racial and economic injustices.



This was a problem. Major figures associated with the Freedom Budget felt electoral politics and support of the Democratic Party must be keystones for their strategy – and Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson was committed to a “bi-partisan” policy of “defeating Communism” in Vietnam.



King’s last years included the struggle for the Freedom Budget, the Poor People’s Campaign, the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike – all seeking to secure economic justice for the majority of people.

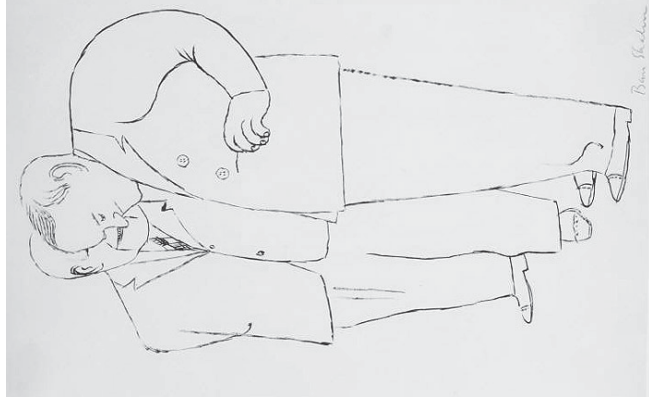


The war in Vietnam split the forces that might have supported the Freedom Budget. Some supporters (not all) joined with Martin Luther King to mobilize against the war.



King marching with Dr. Benjamin Spock, Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, and others.

The problem with the Freedom Budget was that it would have meant an economic and political power shift away from the wealthy. The wealthy and the politicians whom they funded (Democrats as well as Republicans) didn’t want to allow that. The divided civil rights movement and decline of the struggle meant they didn’t have to.



PERSISTING ECONOMIC INJUSTICE,
GROWING INEQUALITY,
THE SPREAD OF POVERTY,
UNEMPLOYMENT AND
UNDEREMPLOYMENT,
DECLINING LIVING STANDARDS,
DECLINING QUALITY OF LIFE

**The Freedom Budget was designed
to do away with such things.**



**The civil rights agenda of such people as
Randolph, Rustin and King was partly fulfilled.**

Accomplished

- ✓ Jim Crow segregation laws knocked down
- ✓ Voting rights guaranteed to all regardless of race
- ✓ Culture of fear in the South significantly pushed back
- ✓ Greater dignity and pride for African Americans
- ✓ Positive shifts among whites and in the larger culture regarding race

Yet to be Accomplished

- Racism and racial tensions have yet to be fully overcome
- Poverty with all its negativity has yet to be overcome
- Unemployment & economic insecurity have yet to be overcome
- Decent housing and health care have yet to be provided for all
- Good education has yet to be provided to all

Those who hope for a better future can learn much from
the experiences of the civil rights movement.



THIS IS NOT

THE END



MAYBE IT'S TIME FOR A NEW FREEDOM
BUDGET ...

